

*Application Serial No. 09/975,642
Amendment and Response to 12/21/04 Final Office Action*

REMARKS

This Amendment and Response After Final is being submitted in response to the Final Office Action mailed December 21, 2004 and in response to the Advisory Action mailed March 10, 2005.

On March 16, 2005, the Examiner and the undersigned representative of Applicants discussed the content of the Advisory Action by telephone. In particular, the undersigned representative was puzzled by the Examiner's refusal to enter Applicants' Amendment and Response to December 21, 2004 Final Office Action (submitted on February 16, 2005). Applicants' Amendment and Response simply rewrote into independent format dependent claims that the Examiner had objected to but had also indicated would be allowable if rewritten into independent format to include the limitations of the independent claim from which they depend and any intervening claim. Set forth below is an explanation of the specific amendments made by the Applicants.

Claims 1-44 and 46-65 are pending in the application. Claims 32-44 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 43, 44, 46 and 65 are allowed. Claims 9, 10, 12-28, 49, 50, 52, 58-60 and 64 are objected to, but would be allowed if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim. Claims 1-8, 11, 29-31, 47, 48, 51, 53-57 and 61-63 are rejected.

In paragraph 8 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that Claim 9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 9 depends from Claim 1. By incorporating the limitations of Claim 9 into independent Claim 1, Applicants now believe independent Claim 1 is in condition for allowance. In addition, Applicants believe dependent Claims 2-8 and 10-31 are also in condition for allowance.

With respect to Claims 43, 44 and 46, the Examiner's Advisory Action indicates that these claims are allowed.

The Examiner has indicated that the subject matter of Claim 49 would be allowable if rewritten in independent format to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening

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claims. Claim 49 depends from Claim 47. Applicants have combined the limitations of independent Claim 47 and dependent Claim 49 into Claim 47. Accordingly, Applicants believe that revised Claim 47 is now in condition for allowance. Similarly, dependent Claims 48 and 50 are also in condition for allowance.

The Examiner has stated that Claim 64 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 64 depends from Claim 51. Applicants have combined the limitations of Claim 51 and Claim 64. Accordingly, Applicants believe revised Claim 51 is in condition for allowance. Applicants further believe that dependent Claims 52-63 are also in condition for allowance.

Applicants have added new dependent Claims 66-78 as dependent upon allowed Claim 65. The subject matter of these dependent claims is found in the currently pending dependent claims. These new claims do not add any new matter. Because independent Claim 65 is allowed, dependent Claims 66-78 are also in condition for allowance.

Applicants have further added new Claims 79-84. The Examiner has indicated that the subject matter of Claim 23 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim. Claim 23 depends from Claims 1 and 11. New independent Claim 79 contains the limitations of Claims 1, 11 and 23 as they existed prior to the present Amendment. Accordingly, new Claim 79 is in condition for allowance. Similarly, dependent Claims 80-84, which do not add any new matter, are also in condition for allowance.

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Based upon the foregoing, Applicants believe that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____

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